



NEW BEGINNINGS . . .

a newsletter dedicated to the pregnant family.

No. 1

Weeks 0-12 of Pregnancy

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Congratulations! You are beginning an exciting as well as confusing time in your life. You wonder about what lies ahead. This newsletter is designed to answer common questions and concerns you may have. Remember, this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. We encourage you to use your doctor/midwife/nurse in your community. **Early prenatal care is one of the most important gifts you can give to your unborn baby.**

Parenting is not an easy job for one person. Unless you have no other choice, it should be a team effort. It calls for discussion and practice well in advance of the birth of your baby.

The first task of pregnancy is to say "I am pregnant." Once the idea of pregnancy arises, early symptoms help to confirm the idea. Some women have strong feelings of "not me," or "not now." This may cause them to postpone getting medical attention. A critical period (the first three months) in the development of their baby may have passed. Smoking and drinking may have already had a effect on the baby. At first, many families find themselves disappointed with the news of pregnancy. This is normal, and most families find ways to accept reality. Difficulty accepting the pregnancy does not mean you don't love your baby. You should see your health care provider early and frequently. Prenatal care is vitally important to help insure a healthy baby.

Physical Activity Activity

Daily exercise is necessary for the pregnant woman. The amount and kind of exercise varies with the individual. Women who have been actively exercising may continue to do so through most of their pregnancy. It would be a mistake for the woman who has not exercised to begin strenuous exercises during pregnancy. Walking is a good activity for those who have not exercised before. Exercise which leads to exhaustion is too much exercise for you. A simple test to decide if you are overdoing it is to carry on a conversation with a partner. If you are unable to continue talking during exercise, stop or slow down your exercising. You may wish to join a supervised exercise class especially for pregnant women.

Tiredness (Fatigue)

Fatigue is common in early pregnancy. This is due to the great number of changes taking place in the pregnant body. Usually resting more relieves fatigue. Whether working in the home or outside the home, rest periods are necessary. Part of the lunch break should be spent sitting with your feet elevated. Part of "We are having a baby" is help from family members with daily home chores. These include meal preparation, dishes, laundry, vacuuming, etc.

Sleep

The reason you need more sleep is that during sleep a growth hormone is secreted. This hormone helps build new body cells for you and your baby. The amount of rest needed varies with each woman. Get enough sleep so you feel rested.



Physical Changes and Concerns

Physical changes that take place in the pregnant body in the first three months of pregnancy include:

Nasal Changes

- Nasal stuffiness may occur.
- Nose bleeds may occur.

Why? These changes are due to increased amounts of the hormone estrogen in your body.

Comfort Measures:

- Increase the amount of fluids you drink.
- Use a vaporizer for stuffiness.

Breasts

- Increase in size.
- Tenderness may be noticed.
- May feel lumpy.
- Nipple color may become darker.
- Veins become more noticeable.

Why? All of these changes are taking place to prepare your breasts for the possibility of breast feeding.

Comfort Measures:

- Wearing a well fitting bra.
- A nursing bra gives more support.
- Ice or cold packs to breasts may relieve discomfort.

Cardiovascular (Heart and Blood Vessels)

- More fluid is retained.
- Varicose veins are a possibility as early as the 4th week in pregnancy.

Why? Your body is producing more blood. This helps to meet your needs as well as those of your growing baby.

Comfort Measures:

- Avoid tight fitting clothing and stockings.
- Avoid standing or sitting for long periods.
- Do not cross legs.
- Prop legs up for 15 minutes during the day.
- Walk for 5 minutes every 1-2 hours.
- If you have a family history of varicose veins you should begin wearing support hose as soon as you find out you are pregnant. You can buy maternity support hose.

Weight Gain

- 3-5 pounds may be gained in the first 3 months. or . . .
- You may not gain weight because of nausea.
- **DON'T DIET DURING PREGNANCY!**

Urinary Tract

- Frequent urination.
- Increased chance of urinary infection.

Why? The uterus is putting pressure on the bladder.

Comfort Measures:

- Avoid drinking large amounts of liquid before bedtime.
- Daily intake of fluid should not go below eight 8 oz. glasses.
- Remember to take your fluid earlier in the day.
- Empty your bladder every 2-3 hours. This may decrease the amount of time the urine is in the bladder. It will lessen the chance of infection.

Vaginal Changes

- Increased vaginal discharge.

Why? The hormone estrogen causes these changes in preparation for birth.

Comfort Measures:

- Wear cotton-crotch panties to absorb moisture.
- Bathe daily. Use bath powder sparingly.
- Don't douche or use feminine hygiene products. They can lead to infection.

Digestive System

- Nausea and vomiting may occur. (Many times called morning sickness. It can occur at any time of the day.)
- More saliva is produced.
- Changes in taste and smell may be noticed.
- Gum tissue may soften and bleed with minor irritation.

Why? Higher levels of the hormone estrogen are present.

Comfort Measures:

- Keep dry crackers and/or hard candy at bedside. Eat before rising in the morning.
- Eat small frequent meals instead of 3 large meals.
- Don't drink fluids with your meals. Take your fluids at least ½ hour after your meal. Sometimes gargling mouthwash will help. Rise slowly from lying or sitting position. Avoid fatty or highly seasoned food. If you arise at night to urinate, drink a glass (8 oz.) of a sweet beverage such as apple juice.
- Consult your health care provider if vomiting occurs more than once a day or beyond the 16th week.
- Don't despair! – this usually ends by the 4th month.

Skin

- Color changes may be noticed on the face.
- *Linea nigra* – a dark line going from the pubic area to the belly button (umbilicus).

Why? The hormones estrogen and progesterone cause these changes. They are produced by the placenta.

Comfort Measures:

- Stay out of direct sunlight. Use a sunscreen.

Uterus

- By the end of the 12th week the uterus is large enough to be felt above the pubic bone.

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FETAL GROWTH

4-12 Weeks

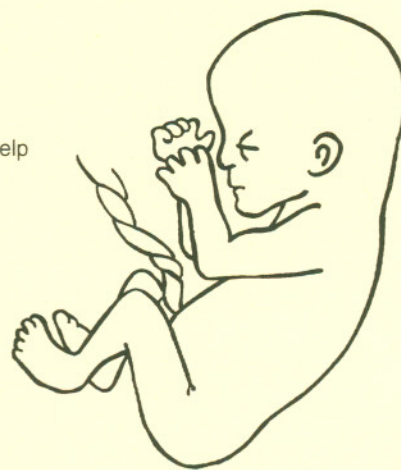
The first 3 months are a time of rapid growth for your baby. This chart compares the actual size of your infant at 4 weeks, 8 weeks, and 12 weeks with some common items. This will help you picture the size of your baby. This is what your baby actually looks like at each stage.



4 weeks
Heart beating
(size of a grain of wheat)



8 weeks
Fingers, toes, ears and eyes forming
(size of a jelly bean)



12 weeks
Sex organs developed, baby can open and close fists and mouth
(size of a ½ donut)

Emotions

Pregnancy is a time of rapid physical change. It is also a time of changing emotions.

New Role

Once women find out they are pregnant, they many times fantasize about how they will be as a mother. Even if they have had children before, they still think about how this new baby will change their life. Women often think about how things were before the pregnancy. They may even feel sad for the life they are leaving behind. Excitement about what is to come is also common. Everyone reacts differently. Feelings of excitement along with sadness are common and normal. These feelings usually disappear as the pregnancy progresses. Share your feelings with those around you.

Emotional “Ups and Downs”

Emotional ups and downs are common. They are due to changing hormone levels. Even though these mood swings can be expected, the feelings will pass.

Father’s Emotions

Men’s feelings vary too. At first, most men react positively to learning they will soon become a father. Many fathers have the same feelings as the mother. Will I be a good parent? How will I treat my child? Memory of his own childhood may bring up positive and negative feelings. These memories may raise fears about his being able to provide for his family. Sharing feelings is the key to working through these emotions.

Smoking adds a needless risk to pregnancy. Each puff on a cigarette decreases the flow of blood to the baby. This means the amount of oxygen going to the baby is decreased. This increases the risk of miscarriage. The growth of the baby and the baby’s brain is decreased. These babies have more health problems during infancy and childhood. **DON’T SMOKE IF YOU ARE PREGNANT! DON’T SMOKE AROUND YOUR CHILD!** Get help from a health professional to quit smoking.

Alcohol can harm your unborn baby. It can cause heart defects, mental retardation, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. These birth defects can’t be cured, but they can be prevented. Because the “safe” amount of alcohol is not known. **DON’T DRINK!**

Caffeine may make you more anxious and “uptight”. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, colas and chocolate. Limit caffeine in your diet.

Drugs of any type, should be taken only on your health care provider’s direction. This includes drugs you can buy in a store. Some medications are safe, other are not. **Always Ask Your Health Care Provider!**

Cat Care is important. An infectious disease, toxoplasmosis, can cause mild symptoms in the pregnant woman. It causes birth defects in the baby. The disease causing factors may be present in cat feces. **The pregnant woman should NOT change the litter box.**

Workplace Hazards Most women can work during their pregnancies with no problems. **Discuss your pregnancy with your employer before pregnancy or early in the pregnancy.** Realize that during the first three months, your baby is most sensitive to defects from hazardous conditions.

Nutrition

Good eating habits do not guarantee a healthy baby, but it is an extremely important factor. Your nutrition before the pregnancy as well as during the pregnancy has a direct influence on the well-being of your baby. During pregnancy you need a balanced diet.

WIC (Women, Infants, Children) is a national program to provide adequate nutrition for limited income pregnant women who are at nutritional risk. The program includes infants, children to five years of age, and women up to 6 months postpartum. If the mother breastfeeds she may receive benefits up to one year. This program is available in each county. Ask your community health nurse or health care provider for additional information.

RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE

Food Group	Number of 1 ounce or cup equivalents	
	Pregnant Women	Teens
PROTEIN FOODS (including meat, beans, eggs, poultry or fish)	5-6 1/2 ounces	5-6 1/2 ounces
VEGETABLES (Includes dark green or deep yellow)	2 1/2-3 1/2 cups	2 1/2-3 1/2 cups
FRUITS (Includes citrus, melon, berries)	2-2 1/2 cups	2-2 1/2 cups
GRAINS	6-10 ounces	6-10 ounces
MILK/MILK PRODUCTS	3 cups	4 cups
WATER (Cups)	8-10	8-10

Choose your snacks from fruits, vegetables or grain products.

FOOD CHOICES

MILK/DAIRY

- 8 oz. skim, lowfat or whole milk
- 1/4 cup nonfat dry milk
- 8 oz. yogurt = 1/2 cup milk
- 1-1/2 oz. cheese = 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese = 1/4 cup milk

VEGETABLE

- 3/4 cup vegetable juice
- 1 cup raw vegetable
- 1/2 cup cooked vegetable
- 1 medium potato

FRUIT

- 3/4 cup fruit juice
- 1 cup raw fruit
- 1 whole fruit

PROTEIN FOODS

- 2 to 3 oz. lean meat, poultry or fish (3 oz. of lean meat is about the size of a deck of cards)
- 1 egg = 1 oz
- 1 Tbsp peanut butter = 1 oz
- 1 can tuna = 3 to 4 oz
- 1/4 cup cooked dried beans or peas = 1 oz

GRAINS

- 1 slice bread = 1 oz
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal = 1 oz
- 3/4 cup-1 cup (1 oz.) ready to serve cereal
- 1/2 cup cooked macaroni, spaghetti or rice = 1 oz